



The National Intelligence Daily

Published by the Director of Central Intelligence for Named Principals Only

TOP SECRET
No Foreign Dissem

Copy No. 133

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 10, 1974

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 205

TCS 640/74

Guerrillas Are Nuisance to Mexican Government

Mexican security forces scored a major success against terrorists this weekend, but they are still a long way from eliminating the guerrillas' capability to embarrass the government.

Senator Ruben Figueroa, who had been held captive since May, was rescued on Sunday after a gun battle in which soldiers wounded a number of members of Lucio Cabanas' guerrilla group and arrested several others. The previous day, another group of terrorists freed President Echeverria's father-in-law, Jose Guadalupe Zuno, who had been kidnaped on August 28. The government had refused to talk with the kidnapers about terms for the freedom of either, but it is possible that Zuno's family secretly met certain of the ransom demands.

Ringleaders Undeterred

Ringleaders of both terrorist groups are still at large, and are unlikely to be deterred in their campaign against the government.

Figueroa had been a prisoner of Lucio Cabanas' group for three and a half months, despite a massive search to locate him.

Until Echeverria became President in 1970, politically motivated violence of this sort had been absent from Mexico since the late 1920s. But shortly after his inauguration, Mexico began to experience the same kind of urban and rural guerrilla crime that is common in some other Latin American countries.

A Real Nuisance

About 15 guerrilla groups have sprung up since 1971.

The groups are small and are not waging a well-organized, sustained, or coordinated conflict with the government.

They do not threaten the stability of the Echeverria administration. They do, however, have the capability to carry out spectacular acts of violence and terrorism,

and they are a real nuisance.

Spurts of violence are likely to continue for some time, inasmuch as the government's response to the problem—increased security efforts, public spending to improve social and economic conditions, and political rhetoric—have to date been largely ineffective.

Lucio Cabanas

The most active groups are the Lucio Cabanas band and the 23rd of September Communist League. Cabanas, Mexico's best known guerrilla, operates mostly in the mountains not far from Acapulco in the southwestern state of Guerrero. He enjoys widespread support and sympathy among the peasants.

His group has staged numerous robberies, kidnappings, and at least three daring and professional attacks on isolated army units.

All of these groups espouse some form of Marxist socialism. All are dedicated to changing the Mexican government and social system by violent means. All lash out at "imperialism" and "capitalism" and claim to speak for the "poor and oppressed" in Mexico.

Army Deficient

In recent months the government has dealt serious blows to some of the groups,

Perhaps more ominous for Mexico's security situation was the attempt in January 1974 by the 23rd of September group and radical students at the University of Sinaloa to stage something approaching an armed uprising in the streets of Culiacan, capital of the western state of Sinaloa.

The Culiacan violence is the kind of mass action that the 23rd of September group advocates. The government's success at quelling it indicates that it may be some time before this group or any other guerrilla organization is again in a position to try something on the scale of Culiacan, but there seems little reason to doubt that the intent exists and that the same type of action will be attempted again.